

The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, September 28. 1695.

Quest. 1. *Since God certainly knows when he Creates a man, whether his Soul shall, or will live in Happiness or Misery; how is it consistent with his Goodness to make that Creature, whose Soul he fore-knows, will certainly suffer what no Tongue is able to Express?*

Ans. If God Almighty's foreknowing laid any necessity on that Creature, so that it could not avoid Eternal Misery; without doubt, the querit would be in the right; but since it does not, 'tis so far from being inconsistent without Divine Goodness, to Create Man (because he may be miserable) that 'tis one of its Noblest effects, since he has made him capable of Eternal Happiness, and has given him so many Helps and Encouragements for the attaining it, that 'tis every persons own Fault (without any Reflection on the Goodness or Justice of that most perfect being) if they perish Eternally.

Quest. 2. *Whether it be Lawful to Court a Married Woman with a design to marry her, after her Husbands Death? And whether a Contract made with her be obligatory?*

Ans. 'Tis so far from being Lawful to Court a married Woman, that its a Crime to Love or Desire her, it being a plain breach of the Tenth Commandment, if not of the Seventh, nay, the Sixth too; since its hardly possible to Love the Wife without wishing the Husbands Death, which is a high Decree of Murder, and will be punished by God Almighty, as such, without a severe Repentance. But if in spite of Virtue and Common Prudence, they have proceeded so far as a Promise or Contract; when the Woman's at Liberty, we do think such a Contract, or Promise, Obligatory tho unlawfully made, as appears by the case of the Gibeonites: When they had by a wyle drawn Joshua and the Princes of Israel into a League with them, to preserve themselves from destruction. Tho such a League was expressly contrary to Gods Command, *Deuteronomy* the 7th. He says, they should make no Covenant with those Nations, but utterly destroy them yet, after they had promis'd to protect them, God was so much displeas'd with the House of Saul for slaying the Gibeonites, that he plagued Israel with Famine, 3 years in the Reign of King David, *2 Sam.* 21. And they were not delivered from that plague but by hanging 7 of Sauls Sons.

Quest. 3. *I have Lov'd, and am Belov'd by a Gentlewoman, of whose virtue and merits I am very well satisfied of; I have long courted her but without proposing marriage, it being very disadvantageous to me. I've since got an acquaintance with a person much more deserving than the former, of whose Love I'm pretty well assured: the question is, whether I ought to shun the first (whom yet I love b. s.) or no? Since if I marry her, I engage my Friends against me, which would, I fear, ruin me: If I marry the second, they would be extremely pleas'd, she having a considerable Fortune and Friends to help me. But then I much fear the ruin of the first, she having a passionate esteem for me.*

Ans. 'Twould be very well, if people would consider their Circumstances before they give too much Liberty to their passion, it being in Love as in War, if they once engage 'tis very difficult to make an Honourable retreat; but to the Business. The not making a formal proposition of marriage to the Lady, is little to the purpose, since Courtship and keeping her Company is sufficient to engage you too far to break off without

her Consent: If ye can persuade her to release you (which sure no woman of sense will deny, when a man desires it) 'tis best to marry to the greatest advantage: but if she refuse you the Liberty of a second choice, you're obliged in Conscience to marry the first Lady (or at least no other) whatever damage you may sustain by the displeasing your Friends.

Quest. 4. *in the 4 of 1 phe. 26. We are exhort'd to be angry and sin not, now when can a man be said to be angry without sin?*

Ans. When the cause of his anger is lawful and reasonable, and when it does not transport him so far as to make him forget his being a Christian, and a rational Creature. The truth is there's but very few cases wherein a person can well be angry at all, but he may be allowed most warmth when either he does himself, or sees others do any thing that tends to the dishonour of God.

Quest. 5. *All good people being troubled with vain thoughts, what do you think the most effectual way to prevent them?*

Ans. There's agreeat many good weak people, that because they can't always keep their thoughts on pious subject, conclude them vain and unlawful, but they are as certain y (tho not so dangerously) mistaken, as them that think thoughts are free and unaccountable; we shall in a few words as possible, tell ye what we think vain thoughts, and how to prevent 'em. In the first place all unjust and low thoughts of God, and all censing, contriving, or desiring to break any of his Commandments; all proud, impure, revengful, malicious, or uncharitable thoughts. The suffering the mind to wander with the heels to the ends of the Earth, or to frame absurd, or ridiculous Ideas of persons, and things, when it might, or should, be more religiously, or usefully employed, is certainly vain: but o' t'other side, it may sometimes be not onely Lawful but necessary to give a loose to the mind, fixing it upon no subject, as in the case of hard study, much business, or sickness, tho not to let the thoughts go so far, but that they may be readily recalled. Now, the best way to prevent, or cure these, or any other kind of vain thoughts, is to furnish the mind with good and useful knowledge, it being commonly the most ignorant persons, that's so much inclin'd to vain thoughts: To call the mind often to an account, exercising it often with pious Meditations; using it to make occasional Reflections upon things, but above all things to endeavour as much as possible, to attain and keep a constant Devout Temper, there being nothing that so directly tends to the purifying the Soul, as Devotion, and the Love of God; and indeed when the mind is filled with the Contemplation of that pure and perfect being, 'twill be no very easy thing for vain and trivial thoughts to gain admittance.

Quest. 6. *I'm a very unfortunate person; and my case is unlike that of others. My Creditors are Usurers, and want not their Money. I have a young and good Wife, beside several small Children. My Wife and I were never extravagant, but great Lasses, no Business, and 2 years Imprisonment have reduced us to great extremities. I am willing to deliver all that I have in the world towards the payment of their Debts, and will give any assurance that's possible to them of it. But they refuse to accept those terms, or grant me Liberty, resolving rather that I and mine should starve. These Calamities reduce me to the utmost desperation; I begin to harbour dark and turbulent thoughts, that*

that may be my Eternal Confusion; I do not, cannot think God Almighty is all goodness, but rigid and severe, and not so tender of his Creatures as he's represented to be; I'm dissatisfied I have not the help of God, not the strength of a man, in short, I feel my self perishing because I cannot comply, with what's impossible for me to do, I desire therefore an answer to these following queries, first, where Creditors are (or may be) satisfied, their debtor has nothing to pay, and that if they detain him long he must be starv'd, whether or no they be't guilty of wilful Murder? Secondly, if any Creditor dyes resolving never to forgive, or release his debtor, when he knows he has nothing to make Restitution, whether he can expect forgiveness from God.

Ans. Your case is really very hard and miserable, and such as one would think would incline even *Whores* to Compassion. But you need not make your self much more miserable, by being criminal, and that in so high a degree as to question Gods Providence and Goodness, perhaps those very thoughts may be one great reason why he suffers your Creditors to be so cruel and inhumane, and 'tis highly imprudent to disoblige such a friend as is soon able to raise you others, at least, to calm your mind, and in spite of all these heavy misfortunes, make you happy. Now to your questions. To the first, there's no doubt but if your case be as 'tis represented, your Creditors are guilty of a more barbarous Murder than if they had cut you in pieces yet Living, and there's a proportionable punishment due to 'em in another world. To the second, we answer in the Negative, the thing being very clear on the first proposal.

The two following Poems, were written by the most ingenious Pindarick Lady.

To Celinda.

I.

I Can't, Celinda, say, I love,
But rather I adore,
When with transported eyes I view
Your shining merits o're.

II.

A fame so spotless and serene,
A virtue so refin'd;
And thoughts as great, as e're was yet
Graspt by a female mind.

III.

There love and honour drest, in all,
Their genuine charms appear,
And with a pleasing force at once
They conquer and indear.

III.

Celestial flames are scarce more bright,
Than those your worth inspires,
So Angels love and so they burn
In just such holy fires.

V.

Then let's my dear Celinda thus
Blest in our selves contemn
The treacherous and deluding Arts,
Of those base things call'd men.

Thoughts on Death.

I.

I'm almost to the fatal period come,
My forward Glass has well nigh run its last;
E're a few moments, I shall hear that doom
Which ne're will be recall'd, when once 'tis past.

II.

Methinks I have Eternity in view,
And dread to reach the edges of the shore,
Nor doth the prospect, the less dismal shew,
For all the thousands that have lanch'd before.

III.

Why weep my friends, what is their loss to mine,
I have but one poor doubtful stake to throw,
And with a dying prayer my hopes resign,
If that be lost, I'm lost for ever too.

III.

'Tis not the painful agonies of Death,
Nor all the gloomy horrors of the Grave;
Were that the worst, unmov'd I'd yield my breath,
And with a smile the King of Terrors brave.

V.

But there's an after day, 'tis that I fear:
Oh, who shall hide me from that angry brow?
Already I the dreadful accents hear,
Depart from me, and that for ever too.

Advertisements.

There is lately publisht a very particular account of the LIFE of the QUEEN, during her Residence in Holland, being — A COLLECTION of FUNERAL ORATIONS pronounc'd by publick Authority upon her Majesties Death, by Dr. James Perizonius, Professor of Eloquence, History and the Greek Tongue, in Leyden, Dr. George Grevius, Professor of Theology in Utrecht, and several other Learned men. — In this COLLECTION is inserted — That Excellent METHOD her Majesty observed in Reading the Holy Scriptures — The manner how she spent EVERY DAY in the week — Some extraordinary Instances of her conjugal fidelity. — Her Conference with the English Ambassadour at the Hague. — Many divine, moral and political expressions, as at several times, and on several occasions they were delivered by her — With other Remarkable Passages in her LIFE and DEATH not hitherto made publick. — The whole attested by those Reverend and Honourable persons that attended upon her. Price 2 s. 6 d. — There is already publisht a FUNERAL ORATION upon the Queens Death, pronounc'd by publick Authority in the Hall of the most Illustrious States, upon the day of the Royal Obsequies, March 5. 1695. by the Learned SPANHEIMIVS, (who had frequent access to her Majesty whilst she lived in Holland.) This is Printed in 4to, to bind up with the forementioned COLLECTION.

The Letter written by Sir DUNCOMB COLCHESTER, a little before his Death; containing his REMARKABLE PENITENCE (which Letter was read publickly by his order, in the Parish Churches of Michael-Dean and Westbury) is now publisht, with other late Instances of that Nature. All which are annext to Mr. TURNER's Essay upon the Works of Creation and Providence, lately publisht. To which ESSAY is added a SCHEME of the History of Remarkable Providences, (now preparing for the Press.) As also a large Specimen of that Work. Price bound 2s. —

Both Printed for John Dunton in Jewen-street, and may also be had of Edm. Richardson near the Poultry Church.